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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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July 28, 1979

MEMORANDUM TO: P, S/MS, S/P, ARA, EUR, L, PA,
AND PM STAFF ASSISTANTS

FROM: S/S-S - David Reuther

SUBJECT: Press Guidance

The Secretary approved this morning the attached press guidance concerning the Soviet Union and Cuba.

These questions and answers are on an if asked basis.

S/S-S: DReuther:rd
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1. What is the US-USSR understanding on Cuba?

- The United States and the Soviet Union both recognize that an understanding on Cuba exists. The essential understanding is in the public record.
- The understanding is reflected in the Kennedy-Khrushchev correspondence of October and November 1962 (particularly in the letters of October 27 and 28, 1962), and in communications between the two governments in the fall of 1970 concerning the establishment of Soviet naval bases in Cuba.
- The Soviets agreed in 1962 that offensive weapons could not again be introduced into Cuba. In 1970 it was made clear that this understanding included sea-based systems.

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CUBA

2. Has the Soviet Union kept its agreement which ended the Cuban missile crisis?

- We have no evidence that the Soviets are in violation of the understanding.
- Current Soviet naval and other military activities are not in violation of the agreement. They are, however, matters which we watch with great care and will continue to do so--just as four previous Administrations have done. If we see any activities which raise questions, we are prepared to take the steps necessary to deal with them.
- The President directed that we give increased attention, to the situation and monitor it closely. This is being done.

4. Are regular visits by Soviet submarines and the building of submarine-related base facilities in Cuba a violation of the agreement?

- Nothing we have seen to date constitutes a violation of the agreement.
- In the past Soviet submarines have made occasional port calls in Cuba. According to the understanding with the Soviet Union, such port calls do not constitute violations.
- The President has stated that it is the policy of the United States to oppose any efforts, direct or indirect, by the Soviet Union to establish military bases in the Western hemisphere.

3. Does the presence of MIG-23 combat aircraft in Cuba violate the US-USSR understanding?

- A limited number of MIG-23 combat aircraft were introduced into Cuba in 1978.
- The Soviet Union assured us last year that no shipments of weapons to Cuba had violated or would violate the understanding. The USSR specifically assured us that the MIG-23 aircraft were not configured to carry nuclear weapons.
- We take these assurances very seriously.
- Nevertheless, we are carefully monitoring both the quality and quantity of weapons sent to Cuba to be sure no offensive threat is presented.

8. Is it true that Soviet ground forces are now in Cuba?

- There is no evidence of any substantial increase of the Soviet military presence in Cuba over the past several years or of the presence of a Soviet military base.
- Apart from a military group that has been advising the Cuban Armed Forces for fifteen years or more, our intelligence does not warrant the conclusion that there are any other significant Soviet forces in Cuba.

9. Additional Guidance to be Used Only if Pressed
Specifically About a Soviet Brigade

"We have reports that the Intelligence Community has
recently discovered a Soviet brigade stationed in
Cuba. What has the USG done about this?

-- Soviet military personnel have been in Cuba since 1962 at numbers ranging from about 20,000 during the missile crisis to a few thousand since then. We have had for several years reports suggesting that there may be some Soviet ground personnel in Cuba. But we have no evidence on which to conclude that there is a large Soviet "combat" unit as such in Cuba. We do know that there are several thousand Soviet military personnel in Cuba in training, advisory and technical support roles.